10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

437 444 563 426 opium on the quiet, grow rich at the expense of their neighbours. They usually come to Burma single but they can easily marry, for their prosperity attracts the young women, and then they settle down to raise a family of mixed blood, and make a real contribution to the life of the country.

463 313 231 The Karens are at home in the forests. In many cases they became expert foresters for the Government and for the timber firms. Where the use of elephants was needed they were largely employed. There were at the time of the invasion a number of Karen timber contractors owning elephants which they understood and knew how to catch and train and use in hauling logs from the jungles to the river banks where in the rains the swelling streams carried them down to the markets at Moulmein and Rangoon.

The Karens have established a safe way of training newly-caught elephants for timber use. Instead of the more cruel methods of jabbing and brow-beating often used by Indian elephant drivers, they tie the animals up to the large trees left near the point of the V-shaped corral that they build along the elephant runs in the jungle, and then they keep the animals from sleeping by continually feeding and working with them for five or more days, until they subdue their wild spirit and win them to obedience to their keepers. Thus in six months they can train a full-grown animal to follow the directions of its keeper and drag out logs.

477 797 212 From the first contacts with the "Younger White Brother" their desire to read the Book which he brought them was very keen. In the beginning men and some women of all ages went to school to be able to read the

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precious Book. As soon as one made a little progress he was required to go out and teach others. In this way schools sprang up all over the country wherever the people turned to the Christian teaching. Teachers were much respected. They were addressed as *Thra*. With the increase of education went an increase in the standards of training. Many of them were called to go to Upper Burma and teach in schools run by private agencies, by missions and by the Education Department of Government. In the spreading of the Christian teaching among many of the outlying tribes of Upper Burma and the Chin Hills the Karen teachers played a very important part, often undergoing the same hardships that foreign teachers had to bear among more primitive tribes.

During recent years the Karens have taken up all occupations. Their more general education and newly-developed adaptability to take on new ways have given them openings in offices as clerks, in the police, in the army where they have played an important part even as they have in the professions. A number of Karens have taken up medicine, among the most distinguished of whom was Sir San C Po, of Bassein.

Young Karen women have made a name for themselves as nursemaids. Their gentle ways and general reliability have made them most popular and many of them have cared for children of European officers. Several of them have been to England and America. They have also done very well as regular registered nurses in the hospitals and there was hardly a hospital in Burma in which there was not one, or more, Karen nurse. Their work on the whole has been very satisfactory.

With the coming of machinery the Karens have taken

10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
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197 stand, Pwo because of the nasal effect on the pro-
194 nunciation.

197 The Bwè dialects, spoken near Toungoo in the hills
177 about Thandaung, have many nasal sounds and somewhat resemble the Pwo. Other dialects in the mountains differ quite widely from each other but the people in the hills speak several of these dialects for there is now much more intermingling than there was formerly when feuds kept the people apart and made it possible for different dialects to grow up even within a few miles of each other.

193 The grammar of the various dialects is not difficult. The sentence is formed after the same model as the English, with subject, verb, and object. The written and spoken language are very similar and direct. There are honorifics as in Burmese. There is no sex designation in the names of individuals, and so the Karens use *Saw* for all men and *Naw* for all women or girls.

212 When Westerners first came into contact with them
177 the Karens had no written language. But so urgent was
773 the demand of those who accepted the missionaries as
● 797 fulfilling the prophesies uttered by their old poets that some day they would be found by the "Younger White Brother" who would come across the sea in great ships "with white wings" and bring them the Book which their ancestors were supposed to have neglected and lost, that Dr. Wade, in about 1830, reduced the language of the Sgaw dialect to writing. He used the Burmese alphabet, for at that time any Karen who knew anything about reading could read in the Burmese language of the monastery. It was not then foreseen that English and the Roman letter would occupy such an important place in world affairs as they now enjoy.

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Mr. Brayton a little later did the same for the Pwo dialect. The desire to read and to have an education arose among the Karens who became Christians, and as the Sgaw tribe has come into the Christian Church in much larger numbers than the Pwo it has consequently developed a larger literature. The greater part of this is of a distinctly Christian nature, designed to promote the spiritual life as well as to give general information. The people have not had time to create a modern literature of their own although a small beginning had been made before the Japanese invasion. No doubt out of the hardships of these war years a new literature will be born.

VII

DRESS

The Karens had a distinctive dress in their primitive state. Not only was there a national style but each individual village in the hills had its distinctive variations which marked a man's origin.

The general dress of the Karens was an uncut garment made by sewing together two breadths of cloth as they came from the rude loom, leaving a hole in the middle of one end for the head and two small holes at the upper corners for the arms. It was made of their own home-grown cotton, which was raised, carded, spun and woven, as well as dyed, by their women-folk. The ground was usually white as it came unbleached from the loom. They interwove decorations of red and sometimes of black.

Among the Sgaw Karens the smock (called a *Hsay*) was white with a wide lower border of red. The garment reached from the shoulders to the calves and was the only bit of clothing worn. It was large and

10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
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177 fallen. They told a story to illustrate this, for they spoke
181 in parables in order to explain many of the situations in which they found themselves.

538 They said they were like a family which built their little hut for a shelter while cultivating a hillside. There the children and the old sow and her piglets were left while the parents went off over the hillside to cut the jungle and make their clearing. One day a tiger came in and grabbed the sow and carried her off, much to the distress of the children. When the parents returned in the evening they were told what had happened and the father determined to put the children and piglets up on a high bamboo platform out of reach of the tiger before they went to their work the next morning.

The tiger returned and finding no prey within reach set up a howl as he vainly tried to jump to the platform. The children stood it as long as they could and then threw down a pig to appease the beast. This they did at intervals while all the time they were longing to hear the twang of the father's bowstring that would send an arrow quivering through the heart of the tiger. This, the Karens said, represented their condition as they waited for the "white brother" to come and free them from the slavery to evil spirits and give them the Book that would enable them to hold up their heads among the peoples of Burma.

177 Under the impulse of Christianity the desire for
181 education was strong from the beginning of the contact
● 797 of the Karens with the Westerners. They wanted to read their own Book and to have a broader education. They demanded to be taught the English language. The early missionaries desired only to train them for a more abundant life in their own country and for a time refused to teach

10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
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177 them a language that might denationalize them. But
181 when they sought outside teachers who would instruct
●797 them in English, the missionaries agreed to carry on schools in that language, and there grew up the Anglo-Vernacular system (English combined with the vernaculars, Burmese and Karen) that reached up to the
153 University with its degrees. Karen students usually are
871 slower to grasp new ideas than Burmans, but they often retain them better and have been, in proportion to their numbers, just as good students as any other race in the country. When they get over their reticence and fears they seem to be able to succeed in any endeavour for which they have the aptitude.

186 The Karens are often accused of being clannish. They
587 are, but it is their natural self-interest which leads them to cling to each other for protection from their more powerful neighbours. For the same reason they condemn marriage outside the tribe.

181 Although physically the Karen seems to an outsider
152 closely to resemble the Burman, he has many very
101 different racial characteristics which make it difficult for the two peoples to understand each other. The Burman is much like his own national emblem, the peacock, given to show and to a great appreciation of fine feathers. He likes to do things quickly and not too thoroughly. He watches those whom he desires to please and caters to their tastes. He uses many honorifics and is diplomatic in his language and manner. He often wears a silk *longyi* of dainty colours over a body that is rough and unwashed.

The Karen wears his dirty clothes over his unwashed person and feels that the two go together. He cares nothing for personal appearance. He is abrupt in his

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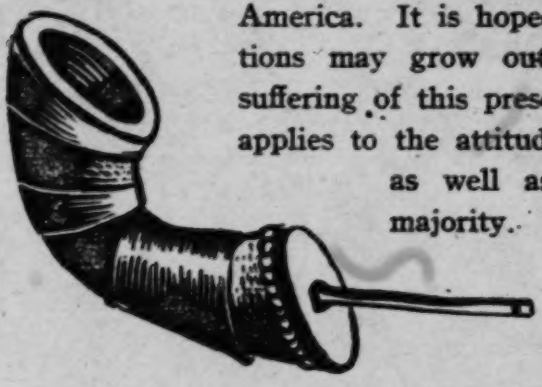
teristics and lived under more powerful neighbouring tribes or peoples whether in Europe, Asia, Africa, or even America. It is hoped that better relations may grow out of the common suffering of this present conflict. This applies to the attitude of the minority as well as to that of the majority.



Pipe

XI

PROGRESS

Very few races or tribes of people have made greater progress in a century and a quarter than have the Karens in Burma. When we think of their wild state, their unhealthy ways, their lack of knowledge, their fear of strangers and their hesitancy in changing their old accepted ways, their primitive agriculture and crude villages, we can hardly realize that some of the refined, educated, well-dressed and cultured people that we have known come from such unlikely ancestry. The "wild cattle of the hills" have indeed turned out to be what they called themselves, *Pga K' Nyaw*, which actually means "men".

One of the greatest contributing factors in helping them to throw off their fears and rid themselves of the fetters of stagnating customs was their accepting the releasing power of the Christian religion. This opened their

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minds and stimulated their smouldering desires for education so that they could read the Book which had been brought to them by their "Younger White Brother", the missionary. Schools were opened and at the beginning were attended by persons of all ages from young children to ambitious gray-haired men and women.

These schools grew in number and in standard of instruction until, within fifty years of the baptism of the first Karen into the Christian Church, a school of collegiate standing was demanded. For many years it was customary to call the school, which at the time of the invasion was a part of Rangoon University known as Judson College, the "Karen College". In fact, the tramway tickets of the Rangoon Electric and Tramway Company were so printed until after the college was transferred to Kokine when the University moved to its present site.

So great was the desire for schools among the Christian Karens, who presented a marked contrast to their non-Christian neighbours of the same race, that they early met the cost of instruction and, in most cases, of the buildings in which their children were taught. This was especially true in Bassein District. Other centres of Karen education and church activity were Rangoon, where they owned their own extensive mission compound in the Sanchaung quarter, and Moulmein at Daingwunkwin, and in Shwegyin, Henzada, Tavoy and Toungoo. Later Nyaunglebin, Tharrawaddy, Loikaw, Maubin (for Pwos) and Insein became centres of activity and influence.

The broadening of their mental outlook has brought about many changes in their lives and in their thinking. A number of indigenous cults have arisen as a result of this stimulation. The conflict between their native reli-

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CHAPTER XXIX

GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE KAREN

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If one were planning to start a movement to transform the life and religion of a race, one would not be expected to choose a savage bandit—a cutthroat who had taken part in the murder of at least thirty persons—to promote his enterprise. But such was the first Karen, under the providence of God, whom Dr. Adoniram Judson, the founder of the American Baptist Mission, undertook to teach.[1] Dr. Judson purchased this man, Ko Tha Byu, who was about to be sold into slavery in payment for a debt, in the hope of gaining access to the Karen, of whom he had hitherto had only fleeting glimpses. Notwithstanding the fact that the bandit was then in middle life, seemed to be hopelessly stupid, and yielded at times to his diabolical temper, Dr. Judson was rewarded for his months of patient effort in trying to teach this most unpromising pupil by seeing his mind begin to open. Ko Tha Byu became eager to learn and gained the ability to read the Burmese Bible. His whole life underwent a gradual transformation. When the Rev. George D. Boardman went to Tavoy for the purpose of establishing a mission station, he took Dr. Judson's pupil with him and baptized him there on May 16, 1828. In this obscure way was begun the movement that has resulted in the remarkable growth of Christianity among the Karen can, therefore, be regarded as complete, which does not contian missions during the last hundred years. No account of the Karen can, therefore, be regarded as complete which does not contain some mention of the widespread influence of the Christian religion among them, raising them from a humble position to one of importance and transforming them to such an extent as to cause their Burman neighbors to marvel greatly at the change.

[1] The Rev. Adoniram Judson, D.D., was the first missionary of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. He landed in Burma, July 13, 1813, and began his labors among the Burmese under great difficulties. His zeal as a Christian apostle, his remarkable linguistic attainments, and the terrible imprisonments he endured, have given him a place among the foremost missionaries of modern times. While he always maintained a friendly and helpful attitude toward the Karen people, he devoted himself almost entirely to the Burmese. His compilation of the Burmese grammar and dictionary and his translation of the whole Bible into Burmese, are among his great contributions to the Christianizing of the country.

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Immediately after his baptism, Ko Tha Byu set out for the Karen villages in the hills. He was shortly to confirm a tradition, then current among the people, to the effect that one day their long absent "white brother" would return to them from across the great waters, bringing the Lost Book which they had looked for with unabated expectation.[3] His message of good news was received with wonder and surprise by the elders in the jungles. Delegations accompanied him to Tavoy to see the "white brother" and listen to his teaching. Among those who came was a prophet, who a few years before had bought from a white sailor in Tavoy a book that he had since regarded as a fetish. On examination this book proved to be a Book of Common Prayer; but the elders accepted the message of their white brother, Mr. Boardman, as the fulfilment of their own prophesies, and a number of them were soon baptized. They wished to learn to read, and Ko Tha Byu became their teacher. Later he traveled in the Moulmein district, and it was there in 1832 that Dr. Wade, while engaged in reducing the Karen language to writing, first learned to his great surprise that the old poems of the Karen contained the "Y'wa" tradition.[4]

In 1833 Ko Tha Byu removed to Rangoon to carry the good news to his countrymen in the Burmese territory of Pegu. By the end of the first rainy season the report had spread throughout the jungles of this region, and groups of Karens came in from a wide area, some to learn more about the mission of the white brother and others to receive immediate baptism and admission into the Christian Church. The movement grew apace and attracted the attention of the Burmese authorities, who forbade the Karen to come to Rangoon and imprisoned those whom they caught, among these being the influential young chief of Bassein, Ko Shwe Waing, who was only released through the good offices of the English resident, Mr. Edwards.[5]

Determined to carry back to his people a few copies of certain religious books which had been prepared for the Karen, the young chief succeeded in smuggling them out of Rangoon. He traveled by unfrequented jungle trails and, on reaching home, hid the books

[3] *The Karen Apostle, or Memoir of Ko Tha Byu*, by Dr. Mason, gives an interesting account of this first Karen convert. Unfortunately this book is now out of print.

[4] Letter of the Rev. George Dana Boardman in the *Missionary Magazine*, Boston, Mass., Jan., 1830, p. 22.

[5] Journal of the Rev. Jonathan Wade, *Missionary Magazine*, May, 1833, pp. 196, ff.

[5] Rev. T. Than Byu, *The Karens and Their Progress*, p. 21.

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in a bundle of old clothes. Long after nightfall, stealthily by ones and twos, men and women came to his house. Guards were posted outside of the village, and the bundle was brought out and unwrapped until, by the dim light of a wick burning in an earthen cup filled with oil, the books were disclosed, including a Bible that was regarded as the now recovered Lost Book. At the sight of this unspeakable treasure some of those present bowed down and worshiped, others wept, some touched and caressed the sacred book, some kissed it, and some gazed long and curiously at its title. They crowded around the volume so thickly that the chief lifted it high above his head, in order that all might see, and all gazed at it with bated breath. They had been permitted to witness the return of their book, and they believed that they were no longer to be members of a despised nation.[6]

The years just preceding the annexation of Pegu by the British Empire, were hard ones for the Karen Christians. Their faith was severely tested by persecutions. Thra Klaw Meh, pastor of a Bassein church, and the converts of his village were imprisoned for their acceptance of the new religion. Their friends collected a handsome sum for their ransom, and all but the pastor were released. He was ordered to give up preaching, but, refusing to do so, was subjected to torture for days and finally was disemboweled and shot. Others were much persecuted, many suffering martyrdom both before and after the Second Burmese War.[7] Until Pegu was annexed by the British Government in 1853, no missionaries were allowed to remain permanently in Lower Burma. Hitherto the work for Bassein had been directed by the Rev. E. A. Abbott and his associates from Sandoway, in Arracan, and that for Rangoon and vicinity had been supervised from Moulmein. But as soon as the country was opened to resident missionaries, Dr. J. H. Vinton removed to Rangoon and established the headquarters of the mission there, near Mission Road, where his descendants are still supervising the activities of some ten thousand Karen Christians. The Rev. E. A. Abbott removed to Bassein and put the mission work of that district on a permanent and self-supporting basis. He has

[6] Thra Thra Byu, then a little boy, went with his mother to see the Book on this notable occasion.

[7] In the Rangoon district Thra Ng Lay escaped martyrdom only through the accession of a new governor, whose first official act was to release him on the eve of his execution day. However, persecution did not deter such men or their descendants from becoming preachers. Both Thra Klaw Meh and Thra Ng Lay have had sons in the ministry, and their grandsons have since been in the Theological Seminary at Rangoon, preparing for the same calling.

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been succeeded by several able missionaries, including Dr. C. A. Nichols, the present superintendent, under whose direction certain industries have been started, including a saw-mill, a rice-mill, and a launch-building plant. Twelve other important centers for work among the Karen were established by the American Baptist Mission. The founding and conduct of churches and schools have been carried on in and from all of these centers. In 1853 Dr. Francis Mason finished his admirable version of the Bible in Sgaw Karen. Meantime, Dr. Jonathan Wade was engaged in preparing dictionaries and a grammar of the Sgaw and Pwo dialects. The Bible was also translated into Pwo Karen by the Rev. D. L. Brayton. A Karen Theological Seminary was organized by the Rev. J. G. Binney in 1845 at Moulmein. This institution was later removed to Rangoon and still later to its present location in Insein, where the Rev. D. A. W. Smith, D.D., served for many years as its president. The Baptist college at Rangoon, now called Judson College, has served the Karen young people, both men and women, since its organization in 1875.

Careful statistics do not appear to have been kept during the early years of the Baptist Mission, and it is, therefore, difficult to discover how many of the Karen became Christians. In 1856 eleven thousand, eight hundred and seventy-eight communicants were reported, but this number includes many estimated returns. From that time on there has been an almost steady increase in the membership of the Baptist Mission, which numbered in 1919 fifty-five thousand, three hundred and fifty-three communicants enrolled in Karen churches, representing a nominal Christian community of two hundred thousand souls.[8] In this same year there were nineteen thousand, four hundred and twenty pupils in the Karen mission schools, including both the Anglo-vernacular and the village-vernacular schools, the converts contributing 375,426 rupees or $125,142 toward the maintenance of these. Not only do the Karen Christians contribute to the support of their schools, but also to that of their churches and pastors. For this purpose they expended 38,596 rupees or $12,856 in 1919. In the same year they gave to benevolences outside of their own fields 152,203 rupees ($50,734) for home and foreign missionary work and 184,627 rupees ($61,532), making a total of 375,426 rupees or $125,122 for all purposes.

[8] *Annual Report*, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1919, p. 195.

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Apart from the generous sums of money which the Karen Christians give, many of the men who have been trained in the schools have manifested the spirit of self-sacrifice by going out to the more distant tribes and some even into China, despite their small pay, in order to carry the Gospel and its civilizing influence to the people in those regions.

The Roman Catholic Mission began its labors among the Karen in the forties of the last century at Myaungmya, near Twante, in Palaw township, Mergul district, and at Bassein. About two thousand persons were baptized. It was not, however, until the arrival of Bishop Biganget that the work of converting the Karen was undertaken in earnest, and it has been continued ever since. In 1919 there were seventeen stations under the charge of resident priests and approximately twenty-five thousand, three hundred and fifty converts, including infants.[9] At many of these stations schools are conducted, which together enroll a large number of Karen children.

The Church of England Society for the Propagation of the Gospel entered the field at Toungoo in 1871, taking over some three thousand members of the Baptist Mission. The work has been carried on from that city, where two separate missions are maintained. Early in 1919 the Anglican Bishop of Rangoon wrote that "the total number of Christian people (in the Toungoo region) is about five thousand. Of these sixteen hundred are communicants. About six hundred are under instruction with a view to baptism. The Karens contributed about £250 to the funds of the two missions during the year."[10] About fifty boys and the same number of girls are boarders in the Toungoo schools. The number of pupils in village schools is not available.

While the figures given above supply a certain index to the success of the missions among the Karen people, it must be remembered that they do not illuminate particular features that have become an important part of modern mission work. The most significant of these features are the education of the children, the training of the men to become intelligent leaders in their communities, and the inculcation among the women of better ideals as homekeepers, all contributing to the elevation of the people. If these results are not measurably attained by the mission work at the

[9] Notes on the Roman Catholic Mission in South Burma by the secretary of the Diocese, dated Moulmein, March 8, 1919.

[10] Letter of the Bishop of Rangoon, dated Rangoon, February 12, 1919.

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present time, it is regarded as falling short of its proper aims. When the people have realized sufficient growth and stability in Christian character and have gained the breadth of vision to enable them to assume leadership in their religious affairs, it will be time for the white teachers to allow them to undertake the responsibility. In the past it has been too much the custom to place undue emphasis on creed and dogma. The development of character through Christian experience is the primary object to be attained, and without the formation of admirable character no abiding result can be achieved. The Baptist Mission—I can not speak for the others, although they may maintain similar ideals—demands total abstinence and the surrender of all animistic religious practices as prerequisites for church-membership. The Baptist denomination is convinced that these requirements have been the means of social and economic progress, although the enforcement of them has tended to limit the growth in numbers. No doubt, much may still be done in the way of character-building among the members of the churches; but when we consider the environment of the people and the fact that they have had less than a century of Christian development, may we not say that they have made remarkable progress.

101 Many of them [i.e. Karen, Andy] have Karen AP7
[797] embraced Buddhism and more especially Christianity. The American Baptist Mission has been most successful among them and draws trainees for the missionary and teaching profession from the Karen. In the distant hill districts the tribes can still be found in their original civilization. There they still build their crude bamboo
[342] huts, often one for several families (21). The

21. Ferrars, ibid., p. 149.

Karenni (meaning red Karen) who live beyond the British administration zone, but still under British control, live together with a few kindred tribes in a separate little state in the southeast corner of the Southern Shan States--1911: 19,008. They are, without question, least touched by civilization. Christianity has won
[771] over only a few converts among them; the demon cult is still the predominant religion. The tall
361 masts, which are erected at sowing and harvesting
[782] time as sacrificial posts for the spirits, indicate from afar the proximity of a Karenni village. A sturdy fence of bamboo wickerwork usually encloses the village itself, and most of the time /Figure 6--Interior of a Taungyo house in Myinka, near Kalaw./ the individual houses are also
343 fenced in (Plate VII, 1). The grain sheds, which are small pile structures, stand some distance away, usually outside the village fence because of fire hazard. This is a custom which can be observed among all Indochinese mountain tribes. This practice is all the more surprising since in the days when raids, robberies, and tribal feuds were very frequent just the most valuable possessions were kept outside the fort-like village enclosures. The grain sheds were secured only by a wooden bar and were accessible to everybody; it was even customary to keep also other valuable
343 possessions in these huts. However, the grain shed
778 seems to have been revered as holy; it is said that